

CENTER FOR DISABILITY ACCESS
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Orlando Garcia,

Plaintiff,

v.

Mary L. Ghattas, in individual and
representative capacity as Trustee of
the Mary L. Ghattas Family Trust
dated 10/14/18;
Lotfi Ghattas, in individual and
representative capacity as Trustee of
the Lotfi Ghattas 2016 Trust

Defendants.

Case No.

**Complaint For Damages And
Injunctive Relief For Violations
Of: Americans With Disabilities
Act; Unruh Civil Rights Act**

Plaintiff Orlando Garcia complains of Mary L. Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as Trustee of the Mary L. Ghattas Family Trust dated 10/14/18; Lotfi Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as Trustee of the Lotfi Ghattas 2016 Trust; and alleges as follows:

PARTIES:

1. Plaintiff is a California resident with physical disabilities. Plaintiff suffers from Cerebral Palsy. He has manual dexterity issues. He cannot walk.

1 He uses a wheelchair for mobility.

2 2. Defendant Mary L. Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as
3 Trustee of the Mary L. Ghattas Family Trust dated 10/14/18, owned the real
4 property located at or about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California,
5 in February 2022.

6 3. Defendant Mary L. Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as
7 Trustee of the Mary L. Ghattas Family Trust dated 10/14/18, owns the real
8 property located at or about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California,
9 currently.

10 4. Defendant Lotfi Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as
11 Trustee of the Lotfi Ghattas 2016 Trust, owned the real property located at or
12 about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, in February 2022.

13 5. Defendant Lotfi Ghattas, in individual and representative capacity as
14 Trustee of the Lotfi Ghattas 2016 Trust, owns the real property located at or
15 about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, currently.

16 6. Defendant Mary L. Ghattas owned Bus Stop Liquors & Deli located at or
17 about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, in February 2022.

18 7. Defendant Mary L. Ghattas owns Bus Stop Liquors & Deli located at or
19 about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, currently.

20 8. Defendant Lotfi Ghattas owned Bus Stop Liquors & Deli located at or
21 about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, in February 2022.

22 9. Defendant Lotfi Ghattas owns Bus Stop Liquors & Deli ("Store") located
23 at or about 2698 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, California, currently.

24 10. Plaintiff does not know the true names of Defendants, their business
25 capacities, their ownership connection to the property and business, or their
26 relative responsibilities in causing the access violations herein complained of,
27 and alleges a joint venture and common enterprise by all such Defendants.
28 Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the Defendants herein is

1 responsible in some capacity for the events herein alleged, or is a necessary
2 party for obtaining appropriate relief. Plaintiff will seek leave to amend when
3 the true names, capacities, connections, and responsibilities of the Defendants
4 are ascertained.

5
6 **JURISDICTION & VENUE:**

7 11. The Court has subject matter jurisdiction over the action pursuant to 28
8 U.S.C. § 1331 and § 1343(a)(3) & (a)(4) for violations of the Americans with
9 Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.

10 12. Pursuant to supplemental jurisdiction, an attendant and related cause
11 of action, arising from the same nucleus of operative facts and arising out of
12 the same transactions, is also brought under California's Unruh Civil Rights
13 Act, which act expressly incorporates the Americans with Disabilities Act.

14 13. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and is
15 founded on the fact that the real property which is the subject of this action is
16 located in this district and that Plaintiff's cause of action arose in this district.

17
18 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS:**

19 14. Plaintiff went to the Store in February 2022 with the intention to avail
20 himself of its goods or services motivated in part to determine if the
21 defendants comply with the disability access laws. Not only did Plaintiff
22 personally encounter the unlawful barriers in February 2022, but he wanted
23 to return and patronize the business two more times but was specifically
24 deterred due to his actual personal knowledge of the barriers gleaned from his
25 encounter with them.

26 15. The Store is a facility open to the public, a place of public
27 accommodation, and a business establishment.

28 16. Unfortunately, on the date of the plaintiff's visit, the defendants failed

1 to provide wheelchair accessible sales counters in conformance with the ADA
2 Standards as it relates to wheelchair users like the plaintiff.

3 17. The Store provides sales counters to its customers but fails to provide
4 wheelchair accessible sales counters in conformance with the ADA Standards.

5 18. A problem that plaintiff encountered was that the sales counter was too
6 high. There was no counter that was 36 inches or less in height that plaintiff
7 could use for his transactions.

8 19. Plaintiff believes that there are other features of the sales counters that
9 likely fail to comply with the ADA Standards and seeks to have fully compliant
10 sales counters for wheelchair users.

11 20. On information and belief, the defendants currently fail to provide
12 wheelchair accessible sales counters.

13 21. Additionally, on the date of the plaintiff's visit, the defendants failed to
14 provide wheelchair accessible paths of travel in conformance with the ADA
15 Standards as it relates to wheelchair users like the plaintiff.

16 22. The Store provides paths of travel to its customers but fails to provide
17 wheelchair accessible paths of travel in conformance with the ADA Standards.

18 23. One problem that plaintiff encountered was that the paths of travel
19 inside the Store narrowed to less than 36 inches in width in some places.

20 24. Plaintiff believes that there are other features of the paths of travel that
21 likely fail to comply with the ADA Standards and seeks to have fully compliant
22 paths of travel for wheelchair users.

23 25. On information and belief, the defendants currently fail to provide
24 wheelchair accessible paths of travel.

25 26. The failure to provide accessible facilities created difficulty and
26 discomfort for the Plaintiff.

27 27. These barriers relate to and impact the plaintiff's disability. Plaintiff
28 personally encountered these barriers.

1 28. As a wheelchair user, the plaintiff benefits from and is entitled to use
2 wheelchair accessible facilities. By failing to provide accessible facilities, the
3 defendants denied the plaintiff full and equal access.

4 29. The defendants have failed to maintain in working and useable
5 conditions those features required to provide ready access to persons with
6 disabilities.

7 30. The barriers identified above are easily removed without much
8 difficulty or expense. They are the types of barriers identified by the
9 Department of Justice as presumably readily achievable to remove and, in fact,
10 these barriers are readily achievable to remove. Moreover, there are numerous
11 alternative accommodations that could be made to provide a greater level of
12 access if complete removal were not achievable.

13 31. Plaintiff will return to the Store to avail himself of its goods or services
14 and to determine compliance with the disability access laws once it is
15 represented to him that the Store and its facilities are accessible. Plaintiff is
16 currently deterred from doing so because of his knowledge of the existing
17 barriers and his uncertainty about the existence of yet other barriers on the
18 site. If the barriers are not removed, the plaintiff will face unlawful and
19 discriminatory barriers again.

20 32. Given the obvious and blatant nature of the barriers and violations
21 alleged herein, the plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that there are
22 other violations and barriers on the site that relate to his disability. Plaintiff will
23 amend the complaint, to provide proper notice regarding the scope of this
24 lawsuit, once he conducts a site inspection. However, please be on notice that
25 the plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. See
26 *Doran v. 7-11*, 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that once a plaintiff
27 encounters one barrier at a site, he can sue to have all barriers that relate to his
28 disability removed regardless of whether he personally encountered them).

I. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION: VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (On behalf of Plaintiff and against all Defendants.) (42 U.S.C. section 12101, et seq.)

33. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth again herein, the allegations contained in all prior paragraphs of this complaint.

34. Under the ADA, it is an act of discrimination to fail to ensure that the privileges, advantages, accommodations, facilities, goods and services of any place of public accommodation is offered on a full and equal basis by anyone who owns, leases, or operates a place of public accommodation. See 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a). Discrimination is defined, inter alia, as follows:

- a. A failure to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the accommodation would work a fundamental alteration of those services and facilities. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- b. A failure to remove architectural barriers where such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv). Barriers are defined by reference to the ADA Standards.
- c. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

1 35. When a business provides sales counters, it must provide accessible
2 sales counters.

3 36. Here, accessible sales counters have not been provided in conformance
4 with the ADA Standards.

5 37. When a business provides paths of travel, it must provide accessible
6 paths of travel.

7 38. Here, accessible paths of travel have not been provided in conformance
8 with the ADA Standards.

9 39. The Safe Harbor provisions of the 2010 Standards are not applicable
10 here because the conditions challenged in this lawsuit do not comply with the
11 1991 Standards.

12 40. A public accommodation must maintain in operable working condition
13 those features of its facilities and equipment that are required to be readily
14 accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. 28 C.F.R. § 36.211(a).

15 41. Here, the failure to ensure that the accessible facilities were available
16 and ready to be used by the plaintiff is a violation of the law.

17
18 **II. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL**
19 **RIGHTS ACT** (On behalf of Plaintiff and against all Defendants.) (Cal. Civ.
20 Code § 51-53.)

21 42. Plaintiff repleads and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth
22 again herein, the allegations contained in all prior paragraphs of this
23 complaint. The Unruh Civil Rights Act (“Unruh Act”) guarantees, inter alia,
24 that persons with disabilities are entitled to full and equal accommodations,
25 advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishment of
26 every kind whatsoever within the jurisdiction of the State of California. Cal.
27 Civ. Code §51(b).

28 43. The Unruh Act provides that a violation of the ADA is a violation of the

1 Unruh Act. Cal. Civ. Code, § 51(f).

2 44. Defendants' acts and omissions, as herein alleged, have violated the
3 Unruh Act by, inter alia, denying, or aiding, or inciting the denial of, Plaintiff's
4 rights to full and equal use of the accommodations, advantages, facilities,
5 privileges, or services offered.

6 45. Because the violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act resulted in difficulty,
7 discomfort or embarrassment for the plaintiff, the defendants are also each
8 responsible for statutory damages, i.e., a civil penalty. (Civ. Code § 55.56(a)-
9 (c).)

10 **PRAYER:**

11 Wherefore, Plaintiff prays that this Court award damages and provide
12 relief as follows:

13 1. For injunctive relief, compelling Defendants to comply with the
14 Americans with Disabilities Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act. Note: the
15 plaintiff is not invoking section 55 of the California Civil Code and is not
16 seeking injunctive relief under the Disabled Persons Act at all.

17 2. For equitable nominal damages for violation of the ADA. See
18 Uzuegbunam v. Preczewski, --- U.S. ---, 2021 WL 850106 (U.S. Mar. 8, 2021)
19 and any other equitable relief the Court sees fit to grant.

20 3. Damages under the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which provides for actual
21 damages and a statutory minimum of \$4,000 for each offense.

22 4. Reasonable attorney fees, litigation expenses and costs of suit, pursuant
23 to 42 U.S.C. § 12205; and Cal. Civ. Code §§ 52.

24
25 Dated: March 14, 2022

CENTER FOR DISABILITY ACCESS

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27 By: 

Amanda Seabock, Esq.
Attorney for plaintiff